In the Claims:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling graphic-based linking to the internet, comprising:

receiving plural bit address information;

processing an input set of pixel values in accordance with the plural bit address information to yield an output set of pixel values having said address information steganographically encoded therein, each of said sets comprising pixels of at least three different values, said output set of pixel values representing an encoded graphic; and

distributing a version of the encoded graphic to users, who can decode the address information therefrom and use same in establishing a link to the internet.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 in which the encoded graphic conveys said plural-bit address information notwithstanding transformation into or out of digital form.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 in which the address information is not recognizable as such to human viewers of a rendered version of the encoded graphic.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the address information comprises a URL.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the address information comprises an index to a remote data structure, the remote data structure having a corresponding URL address stored therein.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 in which the encoded graphic comprises a photographic image.

14. (Previously Presented) A computer readable storage medium having stored thereon an encoded graphic encoded according to claim 7.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 in which the encoded graphic comprises a color image, rather than a grayscale image.

16. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling graphic-based linking to the internet, comprising:

receiving digital data corresponding to a graphic image;

steganographically encoding the graphic image to hide plural bit address information therein; and

distributing the encoded graphic image data to users, who can decode the address information therefrom and use same in establishing a link to the internet;

wherein the steganographic encoding is adapted in strength in accordance with local characteristics of the graphic image, said adaptation comprising more than two different strengths.

17. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling graphic-based linking to the internet, comprising:

receiving digital data corresponding to a graphic image;

steganographically encoding the graphic image to hide plural bit address information therein; and

distributing the encoded graphic image data to users, who can decode the address information therefrom and use same in establishing a link to the internet;

wherein said distributing comprises distributing the encoded graphic image data in digital, rather than hardcopy, form.

18. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling graphic-based linking to the internet, comprising:

receiving digital data corresponding to a graphic image;

steganographically encoding the graphic image to hide plural bit address information therein; and

distributing the encoded graphic image data to users, who can decode the address information therefrom and use same in establishing a link to the internet;

wherein the plural-bit address information is encoded redundantly through the graphic image, wherein all of said plural bits can be recovered both from first and second non-overlapping excerpts of said image.

19-21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) A method for graphic-based linking to a computer address, comprising:

receiving digital data at a user's computer, the data corresponding to a graphic image;

using plural-bit index data steganographically decoded from said graphic image digital data to index a database;

obtaining from said database a URL address corresponding to said plural-bit index data;

establishing a link to said URL address; and

presenting a screen display on the user's computer in accordance with information obtained from said URL address.

23. (Previously Presented) A method of initiating access to a computer via a data communications medium, the method comprising:

providing first data indicative of an address associated with the computer;

steganographically embedding the first data in a second object comprising visual data, said embedding occurring in-band within said visual data, rather than in a part of said second object not intended for presentation to a user;

decoding from the second object the steganographically embedded first data; and

initiating a link to the computer using the first data.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein the first data comprises a URL address.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein the first data comprises an index number for use in accessing a data base.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 that includes performing said decoding and initiating in the same device.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 in which the second object is in digital form, and is not rendered into human-perceptible form between said embedding and decoding.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 that includes distributing the second object to at least certain members of the public between said embedding and decoding.

29. (Previously Presented) A method of initiating access to a computer via a data communications medium, the method comprising:

providing first data indicative of an address associated with the computer;

steganographically embedding the first data in an object comprising visual data, said embedding extending generally throughout a sampled representation of said object, rather than localized in a particular portion thereof, wherein the complete first data can be recovered from an excerpt of said object and used to initiate a link to the computer.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 in which the object is represented by plural samples, and said embedding changes a majority of said samples.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 in which the object is represented by plural samples, and the embedding is relatively weaker in regions where it might more readily be perceived.

32 – 74. (Canceled)

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said processing comprises combining overlay data with said input set of pixel values.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said processing changes pixel values, and the magnitudes of said changes approximate magnitudes of naturally-occurring digital image noise.

77. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein the encoded graphic comprises continuous tones.

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said processing comprises changing values of at least certain of the pixels in the input set of pixel values.

79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said processing comprises changing values of at least certain of the pixels of the input set of pixels values based, in part, on initial values thereof.

80. (Previously Presented) A method for enabling graphic-based linking to the internet, comprising:

receiving plural bit address information;

processing input graphic information in accordance with the plural bit address information to yield encoded graphic information having the address information steganographically encoded therein; and

distributing a version of the encoded graphic information to users, said version representing the encoded graphic in continuous tone form.

81-87. (Canceled)